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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 25, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 25, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL

ZAMAN / RADIKAL / TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: According to the first two dailies, DTP Chairperson Ahmet Turk told a DTP congress held in Diyarbakir that he was disappointed with the small number of Diyarbakir participants in last week's convoy that traveled to Ankara in order to extend support to the cease-fire and to request an appointment from the parliament spokesperson Bulent Arinc regarding the issue (see press summary for December 18). Toplumsal Demokrasi daily, on the other hand, reported that Turk asked Diyarbakir AKP and CHP deputies: "Will you not feel guilty or ashamed when you will solicit votes from the Diyarbakir electorate in the next elections?"

EVRENSEL / TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI / CUMHURİYET: The twenty-eighth anniversary of the "(Kahraman)Maras Massacre", which was reportedly carried out in Kahramanmaraş province between December 21 and 24 in 1978, was commemorated by Alevi organizations in Diyarbakir, Istanbul and Adana. Nearly 110 people were killed in the reported Massacre, and many Alevis had to leave the province during the incident. This Massacre reportedly marked the origination of martial law in many cities that eventually led to a coup in 1980. The dailies pointed out the role of the ultra-nationalist fascist circles in the MIT intelligence organization that initiated the massacre, in particular MIT members who were allegedly in the ranks of the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party). According to the chairperson of one of the Alevi organizations in Adana, the Turkish state, by covering up the perpetrators of the incident to date, has been tacitly supporting the people who perpetrated the incident.

In separate news the KKK, the political wing of the PKK, made an announcement condemning the "massacre" and calling for the democratic forces to come together.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Hatice Adibelli, one of the three senior officials of DTP in Van, who were detained by Van police as they were returning from a party congress in one of the districts of Van, was arrested after being arraigned with her colleagues. Ms. Adibelli was arrested reportedly because of a tip-off given by a defector.

EVRENSEL / TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Panels were held in several provinces in Turkey, namely in Antalya, Izmir and Denizli, to discuss the Kurdish issue and the cease-fire process. One of

the key points made was that the cease-fire was a landmark opportunity that should be seized and that the Turkish government should take steps to resolve the Kurdish issue peacefully.

BOLGE / EKSPRES: The dailies highlight the discussions going on in Adana between AKP deputies and Cukurova University circles and civil society organizations, regarding a TOKI (Mass Housing Administration) project. This project envisages the construction of a 400-bed hospital, a mosque, and a hotel on the land belonging to Cukurova University.

SECURITY

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: The spouse of a former village guard claimed that police replaced blank cartridge cases with other casings at the site of an alleged December 19 incident. In this incident, a village guard had died under mysterious circumstances in Sanliurfa's Beytusseba district in front of his house. The wife of the slain man added that authorities seized the gun they had issued to the guard on grounds that he was attending illicit meetings of the former DEHAP party. The authorities reportedly also put pressure later on the village guard to take up arms again to fight terrorists.

CRIME / LAW ENFORCEMENT

ZAMAN / HURRIYET / EVRENSEL / TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI / CUMHURİYET / RADIKAL: Three male students, who were all 13 years old, were arrested on child sexual abuse charges. They had allegedly assaulted four younger male children in the first, second and third grades of the primary school in one of the public boarding schools of Tunceli's Mazgirt district. The arrested students claimed, in their statements, that they had also been victims of sexual abuse in the school. The principal of the school, the

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psychological guidance teacher, and another administrator have been suspended. The Governor's Office has asked inspectors from the Ministry of Education to look into the incident.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Unidentified persons tore apart the Turkish flag that was hanging on a mast in the yard of a primary school in Mus. The torn flag was later put in a coffin that was placed in the yard of a mosque standing next to the school. Police are currently investigating the incident.

BOLGE / ZAMAN: Adana police conducted simultaneous operations in several sections of the province, and apprehended seven alleged members of an illegal organization called the "Selefi Organization." Police launched the operations upon receiving a tip-off that the organization had established links with Al-Qaeda terrorist organization. Two of the detainees, who were arraigned, were formally arrested. The others were released to stand trial later.

ECONOMY

ZAMAN / RADIKAL: The Free Trade Agreement, which was signed after long discussions and deliberations between Turkey and Syria, will take effect as of January 1, 2007. Gaziantep province has already increased its exports to Syria by 79 percent as compared to the previous year's figures. Those developments have greatly benefited a shopping mall company named Metro Grup whose investors are German-based. Metro Grup opened its 10th branch in Gaziantep, and has reportedly received an influx of customers from Aleppo to date.

CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

EVRENSEL / TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: The Kurdish Music Conference was held between December 23 and 24 in the conference hall of the Baglar district's municipality in Diyarbakir. The article criticizes the fact that Turkish was mostly used as a medium of language during the sessions and presentations held throughout the two-day conference. Academicians pointed out that despite

the fact that people use Kurdish in daily life, academic discussions were not held in Kurdish.

ZAMAN: The Ministry of Tourism and Culture allocated 4.5 million YTL to support a restoration project aimed at preserving the historical Suleyman Sah Tomb located in Syria.
GREEN